

Long Range Committee Members,

July 27, 2005

Notes from the last meeting have been posted on the web page. These notes reflect comments made during the meeting and are not intended to reflect the collective thoughts or outcomes of the committee. Our first two meetings have been intended to raise our collective knowledge of long term planning and its impacts on a community. However, it is time to get to the more concrete component of this process so that we can define a plan of action for the Planning Commission and subsequently elected officials to consider.

I have been reviewing a document prepared by the Northern Illinois Planning Commission regarding long term planning for a six county area. The document is divided into two segments: the first describes the planning problem and process for development of the 2040 Regional Framework Plan and the second describes implementation strategies.

The Houston metropolitan area has numerous independent long term plans based on agencies responsible for implementation and specific areas of responsibilities. Among the traditional infrastructure based plans are:

- The HGAC Transportation Improvement Plan
- Various County Capital Improvement Plans for Roadways and Parks
- The City of Houston Capital Improvement Plan
- The City of Houston Master Parks Plan
- The City of Houston Water Master Plan
- The City of Houston Wastewater Strategy Plan and its updates
- Regional Water Authority Plans
- Metro Mobility Plans
- Harris County Flood Control Watershed Master Plans
- Regional Association Transportation Plans
- Major Thoroughfare Plans

We do not lack for planning in our area though we may not be planning in a coordinated fashion nor may we have covered all of the elements of concern.

We have also had various community goal identification programs over the past fifteen years which have reflected a similar set of values and concerns of the community at large.

I suggest that we spend the next meeting(s) discussing how our community can bring some coordination and order to the various planning initiatives and what if anything should be done to create an implementation structure with ways to measure effectiveness.

I propose that we use the outline of the seventeen basic implementation strategies described in the Northern Illinois process to see if these strategies encompass the elements of long term planning for our community. The seventeen strategies are as follows:

1. Encourage Redevelopment, Reuse and Infill
2. Achieve a Balance between Jobs and Housing
3. Provide Affordable Housing Opportunities
4. Promote Livable Communities
5. Promote Economic Vitality
6. Promote Diversity and Inclusiveness
7. Promote Compact, Mixed Use Development
8. Promote Telecommunications Infrastructure and Technology
9. Promote Walking and Bicycling as Alternative Modes of Travel
10. Ensure that Transportation Facilities are Context-Sensitive with Natural Resources, Historic Resources, and Community Values
11. Coordinate Land Use and Transportation
12. Maximize Use of Existing Infrastructure
13. Protect Water Resources
14. Plan for Sustainable Water Supply
15. Protect and Enhance Biodiversity
16. Enhance and Connect Green Areas
17. Preserve Farmland

At our next meeting, we should define strategies that should be on Houston's version of this list and identify those of lower priority that could be removed from this list.

If we can concur on the basic strategies to be pursued, then we can proceed with discussion about how to implement these strategies within our current framework of governmental and community organizations.